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To Kill MX?

## Proxmire Distorts CIA Defense Spending View

Sen. William Proxmire (D.-Wis.), one of the leading doves in Congress, has used the testimony of Robert Gates, the CIA's deputy director for intelligence, to damage the Administration's contention that the Soviets are still engaged in a major military buildup.

In a press release issued by Proxmire on Joint Economic Committee stationery, the Wisconsin solon—using some of Gates' own words—said that Soviet military growth had been almost nonexistent in the recent past, adding that "it is time for Washington to take official notice that Soviet military procurement has been stagnant for the past seven years and to stop acting like nothing has changed."

Proxmire's press release — based on testimony Gates gave last November — was issued just weeks before the Congress faces its first big test on defense, the MX vote.

Proxmire's press release, however, gave a far from accurate portrayal of the CIA's view on Soviet defense spending, even though Gates—who some say CIA Director Bill Casey had been thinking of making his deputy—couched his testimony in language that the anti-defense lobby in and out of Congress was bound to exploit.

Proxmire, for instance, twisted the truth when maintaining the CIA had said that Soviet military procurement has been stagnant for the past seven years. Gates himself in his November testimony noted that, while the rate of Soviet defense spending growth had fallen from 4 to 2 percent from 1976 to 1983 (still not stagnant), there was "evidence of some acceleration in the rate of increase in defense spending" since 1983.

Gates also said that, despite the slowdown in growth, "spending levels were so high that the defense establishment was able to continue to modernize its forces and to enhance substantially its military capabilities."

A day after the Proxmire press release, the CIA countered with one of its own, stressing:

"[C]urrent Soviet levels of spending are so high that, despite the procurement plateau, Soviet forces received in the years 1977 through 1983 a total of 1,100 ICBMs, more than 700 SLBMs, 300

bombers, 5,000 fighters, some 15,000 new tanks, and substantial numbers of new additional major surface combatants, nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, and attack submarines.

"During the same period, the U.S. added to its inventory 135 ICBMs, 390 SLBMs, no bombers, 3,000 fighters, 5,000 tanks, and 106 major warships....

"Soviet efforts to develop advanced weapon systems continue in the 1980s at least at the rapid pace of the previous two decades. Among these

weapons are fighter and airborne control aircraft, ballistic and cruise missiles, space systems and submarines. The new systems cover the full range of technologically advanced weaponry the Soviets will need to modernize all their forces."

Proxmire, in short, was giving a distorted view of the CIA's position on defense spending, but there is some concern within intelligence circles that Gates — through his prepared statement to the JEC—provided the Wisconsinite with much of the ammunition.